



**HOUSE ARMED SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRORISM AND
UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS
JIM SAXTON, NEW JERSEY
CHAIRMAN**

PRESS RELEASE

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OPENING STATEMENT OF JIM SAXTON

***Posture Hearing on the Fiscal Year 2007 Budget Request for the
U.S. Special Operations Command***

Washington, D.C. – The subcommittee meets this afternoon to consider the fiscal year 2007 budget request of the U. S. Special Operations Command. We all fully understand that the annual SOCOM oversight hearing is one of the most important sessions we will conduct each year. Not only is the U.S. Special Operations Command the lead command in the ongoing, and in all likelihood perpetual war against terror, the command is slated to begin a period of significant growth this year based upon the conclusions of the Quadrennial Defense Review.

The QDR, released in conjunction with the President's fiscal year 2007 budget request, places considerable emphasis upon special operating forces, generally finding (and I am greatly oversimplifying here) that the United States military has adequate capability to defeat any adversary on a conventional battlefield, but lacks the resources necessary to effectively conduct the panoply of special operations mission necessary around the globe. This is truly a long war—maybe even a perpetual war as I stated earlier—and a global effort. SOCOM has concentrated and performed magnificently in Iraq and Afghanistan, but has had to neglect to some degree other critical areas of the world to execute its urgent combat missions.

To remedy that shortfall, the QDR recommends, and the fiscal 2007 budget begins to fund, several key initiatives. The most dramatic would increase the size of SOCOM by over 13,000 personnel, or 25 percent, by fiscal year 2011. 2,600 of that number are part of the newest element of SOCOM, the Marine Corps Special Operations Command, but growth is projected in Army Green Beret and Navy SEAL units as well.

Additionally, the SOCOM budget is projected to increase almost 20 percent over the fiscal year 2006 appropriation to over \$8 billion. When one considers that just four years ago, SOCOM's budget was \$5 billion, the command has received significant new funding, a 60 per cent increase since fiscal year 2003, if inflation is ignored. We all realize that great challenges come with an expanding budget, an expanding mission, and most importantly, conducting a tough war on multiple fronts against a clever, vicious enemy. To my mind, the intrepid warriors and great leaders of the command are up to the task.

I believe, as one member, that the money we have spent and propose to spend on SOCOM is money well spent. In fact, I cannot think of a higher priority for funding anywhere in the federal government than the SOCOM budget. It represents a direct investment in keeping America and Americans safe here at home.

I have traveled to Iraq and Afghanistan a number of times over the last three years, and am always impressed by the quiet professionalism, resolve, and courage of our special forces. They are truly remarkable men and women anonymously protecting us all from the scourge of terrorism. I am proud to be associated with them in some small way.

Although the focus of the hearing will be on the QDR and associated resource questions, we will consider other matters as well. I would like to get our witnesses' views on the record on the sustainability of SOCOM's elite manpower, in light of the fierce competition for the skills of experienced operators and the projected growth in the force.

Additionally, I am always interested in exploring the interagency piece of the equation. This global war requires a unified U.S. government effort across all departments. I would like to hear the witnesses' views on how well that effort is going, both here in Washington and in field operations, and what we may need to do to help.

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